
U.S. Senate
Republican Policy
Committee

Larry E. Craig, Chairman
Jade West, Staff Director

Conference Report Highlights

October 7, 1998

Highlights of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 4194 —Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations, FY 1999

The bill provides a net of \$93.4 billion in new budget authority. Of this total, \$70.04 billion is discretionary and the remainder is mandatory. The bill includes \$10.2 billion for Section 8 rental assistance. Conferees agreed to include a compromise version of the Housing Opportunity and Responsibility Act (H.R. 2) that would replace a myriad of housing programs with block grants, make rent subsidies available to more poor families (about 90,000 Section 8 vouchers for low-income tenants) and allow more working poor into public housing.

Budget Authority

Bill Total:	\$93.39 billion (Discretionary: \$70.04 billion)
1998 Appropriations:	\$89.99 billion (Discretionary: \$66.23 billion)
1999 Request:	\$102.18 billion (Discretionary: \$70.31 billion)

Key Provisions

Veterans Affairs Total: \$42.59 billion (\$23.3 mandatory, \$19.2 discretionary)

- Conferees provide a significant increase for Veterans health care, appropriating \$17.25 billion for the Veterans Health Administration — an increase of \$222 million over the request and \$193 million over 1998. The largest increases were in medical care, medical and prosthetic research, state home construction and other construction.
- VA medical research is funded at \$316 million, \$16 million over the President's request, \$44 million over FY98.
- Appropriations for the Veterans Benefits Administration total \$23.5 billion.

Housing and Urban Development Total: \$26 billion

- Provides funding for all expiring section 8 contracts (\$9.6 billion).

- Conferees provide \$310 million for Drug Elimination Grants; \$625 million for revitalization of severely distressed housing (HOPE VI); \$620 million for Native American housing block grants; \$215 million for Housing Opportunities for People With Aids (HOPWA); \$1.6 billion for the Home Investments Partnership Program (HOME); \$975 million for homeless assistance grants; \$854 million for Housing for Special Populations (of which \$660 million is for section 202).
- Funding for Community Development Block Grants is increased to \$4.75 billion. Conferees earmarked \$12 million in grants for the Oklahoma City bombing aftermath.
- Conferees include language to make Brownfields cleanup eligible for CDBG funds; and to extend the FHA single family streamlined down-payment program nationwide;

Environmental Protection Agency: \$7.56 billion (\$192 million more than FY98)

Science and Technology	\$650 million
Enviro Programs & Mgmt	\$1.85 billion
Inspector General	\$31.2 million
Buildings & Facilities	\$56.9 million
Superfund	\$1.5 billion*
Leaking Storage Tanks	\$72.5 million
Oil spill response	\$15 million
State, Tribal Assistance	\$3.387 billion

* The Superfund program is cited by the GAO as burdened by fraud, waste and abuse. However, the appropriated level for 1999 (\$1.5 billion) is virtually unchanged from 1998. The 1998 bill contained an additional appropriation of \$650 million for EPA Superfund, subject to reauthorization of the program. As yet, the program has not been reauthorized.

- Global Climate Change research is increased \$10 million over FY98, bringing the FY99 funding to \$27 million.
- Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds are funded at the President's requested level \$775 million, \$50 million more than FY98.
- Clean Water State Revolving Funds are increased \$275 million over the President's request, bring the FY99 funding to \$1.35 billion.
- The Office of Science and Technology Policy is funded at \$5 million; and the Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Environmental Quality is funded at \$2.7 million.

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA): \$826.9 million

- Conferees included \$307.7 million for disaster relief and \$240.8 million for Emergency Management and Planning Assistance.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA): \$13.7 billion

- Funds include — Human Space Flight: \$5.48 billion (\$2.3 billion for Space Station; \$3.1 billion for shuttle operations); Science, Aeronautics and Technology: \$5.65 billion; and Mission Support: \$2.51 billion.

National Science Foundation: \$2.77 billion

- This represents an increase of \$224 million from FY 1998.

Other Independent Agencies

- Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigations Board is funded at \$6.5 million, an increase of \$2.5 million from 1998.
- Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation is funded at \$90 million, as proposed by the House (the Senate had proposed \$60 million). Conferees provided \$25 million for a pilot home-ownership initiative, as proposed by the House.
- Consumer Product Safety Commission is funded at \$47 million. Conferees direct the Commission to begin reinstitution of the sleepwear flammability standard in effect prior to January 1997 and require the GAO to study effects of the more recent relaxed standard.
- Corporation for National and Community Service is funded at \$425.5 million.

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